

Minutes

Asheville City Council - Public Safety Committee January 8, 2008 – 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Fourth Floor Municipal Building Training Room

Present: Council Members: Vice Mayor Jan Davis, Chair; Mayor Terry Bellamy
Staff: Jeff Richardson, William Hogan, Greg Grayson, Gary Cornett, Tim Splain, Trisha Hardin
Guest: Jerry Vehaun

- **Approval of December Minutes**
 - The committee by consensus approved the December meeting minutes.
- **State Legislators Assistance with PSAP 911 Surcharge Allocation**
 - Buncombe County Emergency Services Director Jerry VeHaun addressed the committee regarding the PSAP and legislation on 911 surcharges.
 - The target move date for the consolidated center is April, 2008 with APD moving in during the fall of 2008.
 - As of January 1, 2008, the State of North Carolina has taken over responsibility for collection of 911 surcharge fees and has capped the rate at \$.70 per phone line. The 2007 Buncombe County fee was \$1.00.
 - An amendment to NC House Bill 1755 to allow funds to be used for purchasing dispatch console equipment is strongly desired. As the law is currently written, it is too restrictive for PSAPs in purchasing dispatch equipment in order to enable the PSAPs to get the 911 call out.
 - The Committee was in agreement to collaborate with Buncombe County to request amendments to House Bill 1755 and to place the item on Council's legislative agenda in February, 2008.
 - The Committee requested a comprehensive update for all Council when the consolidated PSAP is in operation.
 - Mr. Vehaun offered to the Asheville City Council an opportunity to tour the new PSAP facility in Leicester at any time in the future that the council desires a tour.
- **Regional Public Safety Training Facility and Grant Opportunities**
 - Chief Grayson provided an updated briefing sheet.
 - The regional facility is a partnership between local governments, state government and AB Tech.
 - The new facility will include an emergency vehicle driving pad, burn building, and a rescue tower. The \$20 million project is not "all or nothing"—it can be modular. However, a facility master plan is necessary and it is being prepared by an architectural firm that is being paid by Buncombe County.

- This is a regional project with lots of interest from various groups.
- A number of funding options are being explored.
- A suggestion was made that a homeland security grant should be sought.
- The Committee was very supportive of this project and asked that it also be placed on Council's legislative agenda in February, 2008.

- **Internet Child Pornography**

- Captain Tim Splain provided a staff report.
- Detective Anthony Johnson has been trained extensively in investigations of this type and has done valuable work and achieved important results. His training is ongoing.
- It was pointed out that a 16-year-old is considered an adult in these types of cases.
- A question as to whether this age could be raised was asked.
- A question was also asked as to whether the City of Asheville could have a requirement that all persons convicted of sex crimes be required to register as sex offenders.
- The police department will pull the statutes and examine them. However, state law already requires sex offender registration.

- **DSU/Patrol/Housing Authority Monthly Report**

- Chief Hogan provided a handout.
- Crack cocaine is still the dominant drug in Asheville
- The police department is working to remove methamphetamine from the streets.
- The state law restricting access to large quantities of cold medication that contains a precursor for making methamphetamine has virtually eliminated the small meth manufacturing labs in North Carolina. However, more quantities of meth are coming into our area from labs in Mexico which manufacture this illegal drug.

- **Gun Buy-Back**

- Chief Hogan provided a handout.
- The police department is still buying guns.
- They are being independently audited.
- There is a clear disposal process.

- **Civil Penalty Options with Prostitution – Council Policy Initiative**

- Penalty zones are being identified in the city.
- Judge Cash has been consulted and magistrates have been approached about increasing penalties.
- Jeff Richardson will consult with the Legal Department about next steps and a decision point.
- It was mentioned that the City of Charlotte funds items outside of normal activities with their local funds because of identified needs.

- District Attorneys are helping to reduce jail inmates, which helps with convictions.
- **Ban on Sex Offenders in Parks**
 - Federal law requires sex offenders to register and they cannot cross state lines without federal penalty. Some have been lured to Asheville so that they can be charged.
 - Sex offenders' registration is managed by the county.
- **Gang Activity and Culturally-Supported Misbehavior**
 - Continued until next meeting.
- **Public Comment**
 - No public comment.
- **Meeting Adjournment**
 - The meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.
- **Next Meeting**
 - Tuesday, February 12, 2008 – 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm in the Municipal Building 4th floor training room.
- **Tentative Agenda for Tuesday, February 12, 2008**
 - The committee asked that the following items be placed on next month's agenda:
 - Approval of January Committee Minutes
 - DSU/Patrol/Housing Authority Monthly Report (recurring monthly agenda item)
 - Civil Penalty Options with Prostitution – Council Policy Initiative
 - Ban on Sex Offenders in Parks
 - Gang Activity and Culturally-Supported Misbehavior
 - Public Comment
- **Future Agenda Items**
 - Adult Bookstores
 - Strategies for Strengthening Relations with Court Systems
 - Update on Pursuit Policy Changes